

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
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For immediate release
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Agencies to Hold Public Meetings on Sage Grouse and Sagebrush Habitat

SALEM – The public is invited to attend any of four meetings being held across eastern Oregon during August to discuss the development of a conservation plan for sage grouse and sagebrush habitat. The meetings are being coordinated by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Numerous state and federal agencies, in cooperation with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, are working to develop a range-wide conservation plan in the Western states for sage grouse populations and the long-term conservation of sagebrush habitat that will benefit an array of wildlife species.

Wildlife biologists and land managers will use public comments from the Oregon meetings to help develop a conservation plan to guide future management of the state's sage grouse and sagebrush habitat. The agencies hope to release the final Oregon portion of the conservation plan in the summer of 2005. Similar efforts are being conducted in other Western states, and the Oregon plan will be aligned with those states' plans to create a Western range-wide plan.

Sage grouse occur across 11 Western states and two Canadian provinces. Oregon has 18 million acres of sagebrush habitat.

"Local input into the development of the conservation plan will greatly assist in achieving an effective and workable plan that can be used throughout Oregon," said Christian Hagen, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologist and lead writer of the Oregon conservation plan.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been petitioned to list sage grouse range-wide for protection under the Federal Endangered Species Act. The petition cites declines in sage grouse populations across the birds' historic range.

The meeting dates, times and locations are:

Ontario – August 9, Holiday Inn, Lewis and Clark Room, 1249 Tapadera Ave., 7-9 p.m.

Burns – August 10, Harney County Senior Citizen Center, 17 South Alder St., 7-9 p.m.

Lakeview – August 11, Lakeview Senior Center, 11 N. G St., 7-9 p.m.

Bend – August 12, Bend Armory, 875 SW Simpson Ave., 7-9 p.m.

Individuals unable to attend the meetings may submit comments via e-mail, fax or mail. The contact information is:

E-mail: christian.a.hagen@state.or.us

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Comments must be received or post-marked by August 30, 2004 .

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